

lentils. After hours of listening to the trade officials and Mr. Castro, she was successful in convincing him to buy lentils. The lentils he eventually bought were from North Dakota.

We have an opportunity to access this market—not just for North Dakota but for the State of Washington, for the State of Louisiana, for the State of Arkansas, for the State of Kansas. For all of our agricultural producers, open this market, give us the ability to do what we do in every other place. We aren't putting taxpayer dollars at risk. We are simply asking for access to markets.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING GEORGIA POWERS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to mourn the loss of an honored Kentuckian and civil rights icon, Georgia Powers, who fought for civil rights and marched in protest of racial injustice, died on January 30. She was 92 years old.

As the first African American to serve in Kentucky's State Senate, Georgia Powers paved the way for African Americans in Kentucky to enter public service. Even before her election to the senate, she had earned recognition across the State for her efforts to fight for equal rights.

In 1964 she helped organize a march on Frankfort to support a bill that would open public accommodations to African Americans. In 1966, thanks in part to her work, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a civil rights law, making Kentucky the first southern State to do so.

Among the many supporters Powers brought to Frankfort for the 1964 march were baseball legend Jackie Robinson—the man who broke the color barrier in professional baseball—and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Powers remained a close confidant of King's until his death in 1968.

Georgia Powers was born in 1923 in Washington County, KY, as one of nine children. Her family moved to Louisville when she was a little girl, and Louisville was the city that she loved her whole life and represented in the Kentucky Senate.

Georgia Powers' political career was born out of her fight for civil rights. She tried to work with members of the Kentucky Legislature on antidiscrimination laws and found them unresponsive. So when the incumbent senator in her home district in Louisville chose not to run again in 1967, she moved from protest to politics.

The first piece of legislation she sponsored in the senate, a bill for open housing, passed 28 to 3. That was the beginning of a successful 21-year political career. She would go on to become the chairwoman of the senate's labor and industry committee and the sponsor of the Equal Rights Amendment in Kentucky.

One of the earliest bills she introduced in the State senate was to remove racial identification from State drivers' licenses. Powers has said that she was prompted to do this based on her own experience as a 16-year-old trying to get a drivers' license. She was asked her race and the sting of discrimination stayed with her.

Georgia Powers built a stronger, fairer Kentucky by her life's work and her leadership. She was an inspiration to many, including me, for her determination in the face of injustice. I knew and worked with Senator Powers back when I served as the Judge-Executive of Jefferson County. I can personally attest that she was funny, tenacious, and tough as nails—an admirable woman and a respected senator.

Georgia Powers is remembered and mourned by many, including Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin, and even boxing legend Muhammad Ali. Many Kentuckians in public service today cite her as a guiding influence.

Georgia Powers made fighting discrimination her legacy. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in honoring her as one of Kentucky's most important leaders and a champion of civil rights. She will be remembered as a Kentuckian of courage and conviction, and she is greatly missed.

REMEMBERING U.S. CAPITOL POLICE OFFICER VERNON ALSTON, JR.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I wish to remember U.S. Capitol Police Officer Vernon Alston, who passed away on January 23, 2016. Officer Alston was a fixture on the Capitol Grounds for 20 years, and he is missed by the many who were honored to have known him.

Those who knew Officer Alston best describe him as someone who loved his family, his job, and helping others. For two decades, he helped members of the Capitol Hill community by keeping us safe, and on the day he passed away, he helped members of his own community in Magnolia, DE, by shoveling snow for his neighbors.

Officer Alston was a caring and modest man who took great pride in his work. As a former Capitol Police officer myself, I understand the dedication and sacrifice required of members of the Capitol Police force, and Officer Alston was an exemplar of these traits. I am saddened that the U.S. Capitol Police has lost one of our own, but I will always be grateful for Officer Alston's service to the Capitol Police force and to our Nation.

Officer Alston was loved dearly by his friends and family. He is survived by his wife Nicole; daughters Brittany and Yasmine; and sons Brandon, Israel, and Breyden. My condolences go out to Officer Alston's family during this difficult time.

RECENT REGULATORY CHANGES RELATED TO CUBA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week the administration took another step in unraveling the web of onerous, misguided, and self-defeating restrictions on the ability of American citizens to travel to Cuba and to interact with the people of Cuba.

Effective as of January 27, the Departments of Treasury and Commerce published revised regulations that end certain payment and financing restrictions, allow for more authorized exports to Cuba in a variety of sectors, and expand authorized travel categories and allow additional travel-related transactions.

Restrictions on providing access to credit, which have been among the most commonly cited barriers to exporting to Cuba, were removed. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control amended regulations regarding non-agricultural exports, and it is now possible for U.S. banks to provide direct financing for authorized exports to Cuba, as opposed to requiring cash in advance or routing through a third country which had stymied many transactions that could benefit American companies and Cuban consumers.

General licenses, meaning that a specific license application is no longer required, are now provided for a variety of categories, including telecommunications items that improve communications to, from, and among Cubans; certain agricultural items, such as insecticides and equipment, although not agricultural commodities; items for the safety of civil aviation and safe operation of commercial aircraft; and items necessary for the environmental protection of U.S. and international air quality, waters, or coastlines including items related to renewable energy or energy efficiency.

And it is now permissible, subject to case-by-case review, to export to some Cuban state-owned enterprises that "provide goods and services to the Cuban people." This includes items for agricultural production, education, food processing, public transportation, wholesale distribution, and construction of facilities for supplying energy, among others. As much as we disagree with many of the policies of the Cuban Government, it is undeniable that it provides health care, education, public transportation, and many other services that the Cuban people rely on.

However, exports to state-owned enterprises that primarily generate revenue for the government remain ineligible to receive U.S. exports along with military, police, intelligence, and security services.